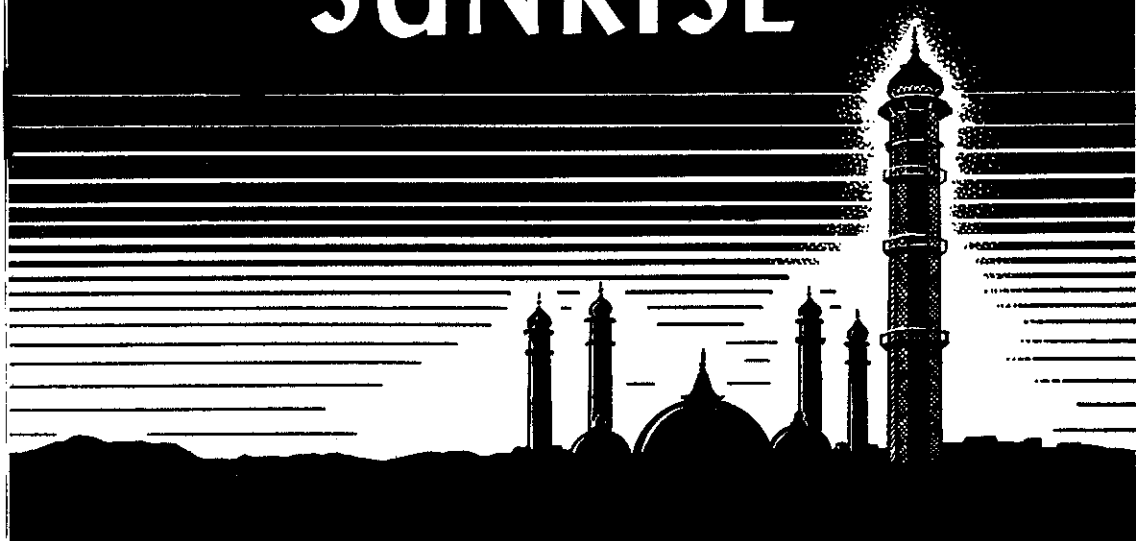


# THE MUSLIM SUNRISE



## Contents

A Passage From the Holy Quran .....	1
A Saying of the Holy Prophet .....	2
The Challenge of Communism and Islam .....	3
<i>An Editorial</i>	
Editorial Notes .....	6
Islam and International Relations .....	9
<i>Professor Muhammad Aslam</i>	
The Origin of Islamic Culture .....	19
Current Topics: .....	23
Islam's Influence upon Western Thought	
Marriage, Divorce and Church of England	
American Stake in the Middle East	
<i>Announcing the publication of</i>	
The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam .....	28
Book Reviews .....	29

## The Ahmadiyya Movement In Islam

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets, he came to serve and re-interpret the final and eternal teaching laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the *True and Real Islam* and seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad under whose directions the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

### INDIA

Qadian, E. Punjab

### PAKISTAN (Center)

Rabwah, Punjab

### U.S.A.

1. The American Fazl Mosque,  
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.  
Washington 8, D.C.
2. 2522 Webster Avenue,  
Pittsburgh 19, Pa.
3. 4448 S. Wabash Ave.  
Chicago 15, Ill.
4. 265 W. 30th Street,  
New York 1, N. Y.

### ENGLAND

The London Mosque,  
63 Melrose Road,  
London S.W. 18

### BRITISH WEST INDIES

72 Second St.  
San Juan, Trinidad

### SPAIN

K. I. Zafar,  
Lista 58, Madrid

### SWITZERLAND

Beckhammer 35, Zurich 57

### GERMANY

Oderfelder Strasse 18  
Hamburg 20

### NETHERLANDS

Ruychrocklaan 54,  
Hague

### NIGERIA

P.O. Box 418, Lagos

### GOLD COAST

P.O. Box 39, Salt Pond

### SIERRA LEONE

P.O. Box 353, Freetown

### KENYA COLONY

P.O. Box 554, Nairobi

### ETHIOPIA

Dr. Nazir Ahmad,  
Debra Berhan Hospital

### ISRAEL

Mount Carmel, Haifa

### SYRIA

Zaviatul Husni,  
Shaghour, Damascus

### MAURITIUS

Hafiz Bashiruddin  
Rose Hill

### INDONESIA

Petodjok Udik VII/10  
Djakarta

### JAVA

Masjid Ahmadiyya  
Nagarawanji 57, Tasikmalaja

### BALI ISLANDS

Abdul Hayee,  
Bandjar Djawa

### CEYLON

99 Driesburgs Ave.  
Colombo

### BORNEO

Box 30, Jesselton

### MALAY

111 Onan St. Singapore

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نَحْمَدُكَ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِكَ الْكَرِيمِ

## A Passage From The Holy Quran

O ye who believe! be strict in observing justice, *and be witnesses* for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or *against* parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both *than you are*. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal *the truth* or evade it, then *remember that* Allah is well aware of what you do.

O ye who believe! believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the Book which He revealed before it. And whoso disbelieves in Allah and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers, and the Last Day, he surely strayed far away.

(Al-Nisa: 136-137.)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ  
لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِنْ  
يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أُولَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا  
الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا ۚ وَإِنْ تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي  
نَزَلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ  
يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ  
ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

## A Saying of the Holy Prophet

It is reported from Abdullah bin Abi Aufa that the Holy Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, said:

"O Muslims! Never wish to encounter the enemy; and, always seek peace and security from Allah. But when you have to face the enemy then be patient and steadfast and remember that paradise is under the shadow of swords."

### Commentary:

This Hadith gives a beautiful description of the teachings of Islam in a nutshell on the philosophy of Jihad and treatment with the enemies. This has been explained in four basic principles.

1. Never desire by yourselves for warfare, nor should you ever be the first to open the fighting.
2. Always seek and pray for peace and security from Allah.
3. If the enemy takes the offensive and the fighting is started then you should meet him with complete patience and steadfastness.
4. Rest assured that in case of such offensive started by the enemy you are destined to attain one of the two rewards; either you will win the battle or you will receive the rank of a martyr in the path of Allah.

No religion, no nation in any period in the history of the world can offer a better code of morality in the matter of both religious and worldly wars. It is also implied in this Hadith that Islam does not permit of the use of force in the matters of religion. Had it been allowed to convert the people to Islam by force, the Holy Prophet would have never said that a Muslim should not wish to encounter the enemy. An offender is always looking for an opportunity to attack the other and to mould him according to his own designs. The Holy Quran has clearly said that:

"There should be no compulsion in religion".

*Al-Baqara: 257*

*(Continued on page 32)*

# The Challenge of Communism and Islam

(*An Editorial*)

We Muslims believe that Islam is a decisive answer to the rising menace of Communism. Our belief stems from several basic principles. We believe in a Living God who speaks to His servants and responds to them. We believe in one God and none else. Islam teaches us a Universal Brotherhood, which is shared both by Muslims and non-Muslims equally and which has been faithfully practiced through the centuries by the followers of Islam like no other people of any other faith have practiced.

We believe in the Holy Quran as a scripture which provides us answers to all of our present day problems. We have been furnished with an economic order in Islam which presents practical and ideal means of distribution of wealth and which narrows down the gulf between the rich and the poor down to the minimum.

In short, Islam is a practical answer to the threat of Communism. It attacks at the very root of those ills which bring communism nearer to a society. This fact was aptly described by Congressman John T. Wood of Idaho. Addressing the Congress he said:

"The world's 400,000,000 Moslems are a deeply religious people. Moslems observe their religion more seriously than do most nominal Christians. Few Christians get down on their knees three (five, ed.) times daily for devout prayer. The word "*Islam*" itself may be literally interpreted, "Thy will be done." Moslems are capable of the most intense religio-patriotic fervor. Witness Islam becoming the greatest empire in world history within the first hundred years after the death of the founder of their faith in the Seventh Century A.D. *Islam is today a greater spiritual force than ever.* . . . Where Islam flourishes the soil is not fertile for atheism. In the presence of Islam, communism retreats."

A general survey of the present world will strongly support the above thesis. The Muslim world, in spite of such laxity in follow-

ing the teachings of Islam has been relatively much less exposed to Communism than the Christian countries. Again to quote Congressman Wood:

"The communizing efforts of the Soviet Union's agents in Moslem areas had never reached the point where internal revolt and the creation of puppet satellite governments were at all possible. Communizing efforts of the Soviet Union have apparently been outstandingly successful only in Christian countries with the exception of China, . . . . Where Islam thrives, atheism dies. *Islam is the invincible, yet invincible, foe of communism.*"

In the face of the teachings of Islam and the evidence of Islamic world's formidable opposition to Communism, one is surprised to read the views of Mr. Manfred Halpern in the *Muslim World*, a quarterly journal of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. He contends that since "orthodox Islam developed in a pre-industrial era", it has prepared a Muslim "to yield more readily to Marxist and Stalinist propositions than to liberal democratic alternatives".

Obviously the author of this idea has preferred to ignore that Islam claims to be a dynamic force and capable to furnish solutions to the problems of an industrial society just as it does to a non-industrial society. The nature of the Holy Quran is quite different from that of the Christian scriptures. While the gospels were written by men who evidently were unaware of the problems confronting mankind in the future, the Holy Quran is accepted as a verbal revelation from the All-Knowing God. A Muslim believes that his Creator has a complete knowledge of both "pre-industrial" and industrial eras and thus He alone can give us such guidance which can withstand the onslaughts of atheistic philosophies successfully.

This may also be borne in mind that the Holy Quran has come down to us absolutely intact and pure in its text through the fourteen hundred years of its history. The same cannot be said about the Bible. Does not that show that it was the very will of God that a teaching

may be fully preserved so that it may adequately solve the problems of an industrial era or an atomic age?

If this contention of Mr. Halpern be accepted that Islam is inadequate to oppose Communism because it developed in a pre-industrial era, then one wonders if any religion at all can be an answer to this atheistic philosophy. For, did not all major religions of the world develop in pre-industrial era? Should we then consider that the world is already doomed and that Communism is bound to prevail? Certainly this line of thought will be most damaging to the cause of human freedom.

Mr. Halpern's contention is based on such false grounds as that "Islam justified" political tyranny "on the grounds that it would preserve religion." Any such idea attributed to Islam shows only a deplorable lack of understanding of Islam which has most emphatically and forcefully stood for the right of every person to practice his own religion with complete freedom. "No compulsion in the matter of religion", is the golden teaching of the Holy Quran. "On the Messenger lies only the conveying of the message", said the Holy Quran and then told the Muslims that "One who goes astray cannot hurt if you yourselves are rightly guided". The attitude of a Muslim toward a non-believer is indeed supposed to be that "Do remind, for you are only a reminder; you are not a watcher over them". Keeping in view these explicit teachings of Islam it will be very unfair to draw a parallel between Communism and Islam on the basis that like Islam, Communism also offers "only the choice of death or conversion to the pagan enemy". No where in the Holy Quran is there any support to this heinous idea so cruelly attributed to Islam by the Western prejudiced writers.

We Muslims are absolutely confident that a regenerated Islam will not capitulate before either Marxism or Stalinism. The fate of the Muslims truly following their religion can never be that of so many Christian countries which have so easily fallen in the fold of Communism finding nothing better in their older beliefs. Instead the true Islam will prevent the tide of Communism and successfully win over this atheistic philosophy. With Islam is destined the return of mankind to their Creator.

# EDITORIAL NOTES

## Church Unit on New Bible Version

Whether the present Bible is exactly as it was written by the original writers is no longer a question to create any big controversy in the Christian world. Most of the modern Christian scholars accept the fact that the finished writings of the Bible are not at all likely to be the same as written originally. They believe that the scriptures have undergone a great deal of modification at the hands of editors and copyists who did not hesitate to write into the text any corrections they wanted to make.

Obviously the process of inserting in the Bible all the so called "corrections" is continuous. This is significantly apparent from the new revised version of the Bible exception to which has been taken by many churches on the same grounds. Among these may be added a vote of dissent by the Potomac Valley Fellowship of the American Council of Christian Churches reported by *the Washington Post* (December 6, 1952) as follows:

"Use of the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible will "bring untold harm . . . to the ministry of the church" and to "the souls of men," a group of Protestant churchmen declared in a resolution released yesterday.

The resolution was passed at a rally of the Potomac Valley Fellowship of the American Council of Christian Churches held here. The fellowship, an interdenominational group, represents about 16 churches in the Washington area.

The resolution assailed the new version as a "modernist" Bible reflecting the "liberal theological position" of the translators. The new version of the Bible was criticized on the following grounds by the group:

1. It removes the teaching of the virgin birth of Christ from the Old Testament by substituting "young woman" for the word "virgin" in the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14.



2. Numerous passages throughout the translation teaching the deity of Christ have been removed and others toned down.

3. The preface to the book makes it clear that the translators did not consider the Bible to be the word of God.

4. The effort of the National Council of Churches to set itself up as a competent authorizing agency for the new Bible is presumptuous . . . only the Spirit of God has authorized the Bible, which belongs to all the people of God.

5. The securing of royalties from the sale of the book by the National Council of Churches represents a commercializing and profit enterprise on the part of the Council for the promotion of its own particular liberal and modernistic ideas and programs, which implicates every purchaser of the Bible."

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## Communism in Christian Countries

*The Church Management* (July 1953) observes:

"While it is true that Roman Catholicism has been outstanding as the great foe of Communism in the modern world, it is also true that Communism is found to flourish in Roman Catholic countries. The kind of principles of action in religion, state and society for which Roman Catholicism stands, offers a fertile breeding ground for atheistic Communism. In Italy and in France, in the Latin American countries, and in Spain and Portugal, where the Communism movement has perforce gone underground, the submerged masses are potential material for the building of Communism states."

The rise of Communism in Christian countries should prompt every true Christian to analyse the causes of its ready appeal. In order to oppose this rising tide one must find out whether it is due to the totalitarian attitude of the Catholic church or to the fact that there is no specific guidance in the Gospels on the subject of an economic order providing a fair distribution of wealth. The inability to find

a satisfactory answer can give added support to the view of some scholars that the New Testament itself has laid the foundations of Marxism. They refer to the Book of *Acts of the Apostles* (2:44-45) where it is told that the early converts baptized by Peter, a community of more than three thousand souls, "And all that believed were together, and had all the things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had needed".

Could it be that those Christians who have accepted the Communistic philosophy of "to each according to his need" have found support of their views from the example of the converts of Peter?

Or, should one accept the contention of Professor John Macmurray? Elaborating his view in his book, *Creative Society*, that the intentions of Communism are the nearest approach to "the Christian intention" that the world has yet seen, he wrote:

"If we put *profession* on one side, and consider only the *attitude of mind* which is expressed in the Communist way of life, we begin to wonder whether there is not something peculiarly religious about it, which is missing in the attitude which is generally characteristic of professedly Christian communities. . . . I cannot help feeling that Communism . . . has recovered that essential core of a real belief in God, which organized Christianity has in our day largely lost."

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Seek the company of good truthful friends, for they embellish your life when you are in bless and bring you succour when you are in distress.

\* \* \* \* \*

Do no evil and you will not fear death.

\* \* \* \* \*

There surely is evil in him who sees faults in his fellows but cannot see the same faults that are in himself.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Hazrat Umar)

# ISLAM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

*PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD ASLAM*

## I.

According to most people the function of religion is to provide only the formulae of worship and the standard of personal morality. It seems as if it required all the complexity of our present-day problems to force upon us the conviction that religion ought to do something more than this. It ought to be able, for instance, to bear upon those larger affairs of man involving the mutual relationships of large groups of people, so that whatever else it may do, it ought to provide a standard of morality for nations as it does for individuals.

With such a conviction growing on most of us, it seems particularly important to examine the historical and religious implications of Islam. The Founder of Islam is about the only example of one who combined in his person the role of the Prophet as well as the King. Every religion, sooner or later, came to enjoy the patronage of a sovereign who issued moral and political edicts on behalf of that religion. Buddhism has had its Asoka, Christianity its Constantine, but the Holy Prophet of Islam was himself the sovereign of the religion which he founded. The precepts which he taught in regard to inter-group morality were illumined by the practice of his own singularly rich career—his dealings in this respect as the Head of a state and the Founder of a system having been recorded in all their significant details, and with a care which one would miss in all ordinary historical and religious documents.

## II.

To begin the story of Islam, one should picture to himself the conditions which obtained immediately before its advent. About 700 years had passed since the Light of Nazareth had shown to the people of Israel the way to the Kingdom of God. Long distance from that Light had now dulled the understanding of men, and left them to grope in darkness and in sin. At such a time came another Light, one

destined to help all humanity to a supreme vision of the One True Lord of all. Like all his prototypes, and more than any of them, the message delivered by the Holy Prophet of Islam roused the jealousies and the worst passions of the people. Thirteen long years of torture, boycott and blockade were borne with a fortitude equalled only by the generosity which he showed to his persecutors in the hour of his victory. Fleeing from his home to Medina, he had the charge of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a people sunk in ignorance and strife. In his position of responsibility almost the first thing he did was to invite the Jews and the other inhabitants of the place to a covenant of mutual goodwill. For this purpose he issued a charter which has been carefully preserved by his chroniclers and a study of which gives the earliest glimpse of the statesman in the prophet. Thus proceeds this document:—

“In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God, given by Muhammad, the Prophet, to the Believers, whether of the Quraish or of Yathrib and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, all these shall constitute one nation.”

After formulating regulations regarding the payment of penalties as between clans, and the duties of Muslims as between themselves, it proceeds:—

“The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices; the Jews of the various branches and all others domiciled in Yathrib, shall form with the Muslims one composite nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims; the clients and the allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom; the guilty shall be pursued and punished . . . no one shall uphold the culpable though he were his nearest kin.”

After some other provisions relating to the internal management

of the State, the Charter concludes:—

“All future disputes between those who accept this Charter shall be referred, under God, to the Prophet.”

Death-blow to anarchy and chaos! Freedom and equality of consideration to all—Muslim or non-Muslim!

The jealousy of the Meccan enemy, however, pursued the Prophet and his followers in Medina. In a series of attacks which followed, hundreds of Muslims defended themselves against thousands of their enemy. Eight years afterwards, when the Prophet with ten thousand followers re-entered Mecca without shedding a drop of blood, the Meccans trembled over the misdeeds they had done; but the Prophet, now in power over them, collected them together and proclaimed:—

“O ye people, I forgive today all the wrongs which ye have done me. Ye shall not be punished.”

Before the occupation of Mecca the Prophet had taken a step, the most momentous in the history of Islam. To all the known courts of the world he had despatched envoys with letters inviting their respective sovereigns to the worship of the One True God. For the first time, therefore, did the founder of a religion himself conceive his message in universal terms. As has been unthinkingly suggested by Muir, the universality of Islam was not an afterthought, and its subsequent spread to all parts of the world not an accident foisted upon history. The letters of the Prophet show that he unequivocally regarded his message as one meant for all peoples of the world. And the letters themselves were no more than an interpretation of the teaching of the Quran, where we read:—

“We have not sent thee save as a mercy to all created beings” 1

And again:—

“And We have not sent thee otherwise than to mankind at large, . . . .” 2

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1. *The Holy Quran* (XXI:107).

2. *The Holy Quran* (XXIV:27).

Towards the end of his career the Prophet found Islam preached to different nationalities, and Arabia entering it in large numbers. A movement for Islam had now been set up, and when the Prophet passed away at sixty-three years of age all Arabia was Muslim.

### III.

The Prophet was succeeded by four Khalifas, who fulfilled, like the Prophet, the functions of the spiritual and temporal Head of the Muslim Republic. The conquests during the period of the Republic which established Islam over the greater part of the known world have ever since baffled the imagination of the historian. More often than not he has described the rise of Islam in the nature of Mongoloid invasion, which in a short span of time overwhelmed practically the whole of the then known world. Long argument about these matters is impossible. But one may read what Michael the Elder, Patriarch of Antioch, wrote in the latter half of the 12th century, at a time, that is to say, when Christian subjects had already had the experience of centuries of Muslim rule. Talking about the Arab rule over the countries which were once ruled over by the Romans, he says:

"This is why the God of Vengeance, who alone is all-powerful, and changes the empire of mortals as He will, giving it to whomsoever He will, and uplifting the humble,—beholding the wickedness of the Romans, who throughout their dominions cruelly plundered our Churches and our Monasteries and condemned us without pity—brought from the regions of the South the sons of Ishamel to deliver us through them from the hands of the Romans." 3

The noble Patriarch seems to see in the Arab conquest the working of the hand of God.

When the Muslim army was in the valley of the Jordan the Christian inhabitants of the country wrote to the Arab general, Abu Obeidah:

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3. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 54.

"O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our own faith, because you keep better faith with us." 4

In another place the people closed the gates of their city against the army of Heraclius and told the Muslims that they preferred their government and justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks. 5

#### IV.

Following the period of the Republic, there arose one after the other three great dynasties which continued to exercise control of some kind over the different parts of the Muslim Empire. The Capital of Islam changed from Damascus to Baghdad, and from Baghdad to Constantinople. At the last named the Ottoman Turks held the temporal suzerainty of Islam until quite recent times. For centuries together a great part of the world prospered under benevolent rule and a reign of freedom and equality. The countries were studded with prosperous towns and large centers of learning. In an account of the growth of the political influence of Muslims, however, the story of the actual spread of Islam as a result of the missionary efforts of thousands who worked unknown and spread themselves to the four corners of the earth is usually obscured. At one time it used to be assumed, and since then it has been unhesitatingly asserted, even in casual accounts of the story of Islam, that the diffusion of the faith was due to the sword. Constant reiteration of this ill-conceived myth has resulted in the widespread belief that Islam inculcates a settled principle of intolerance. Anybody who looks at the teaching and history of the faith can see that this is nothing short of a monstrous libel invented by a certain class of people who in measuring their strength against Islam can do no better than calumniate its fair name. As for the teaching on this point here are just two of the verses of the Holy Quran delivered in Mecca when the Prophet was being tortured by his own townsfolk:—

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4. Arnold, p. 55.

5. *Ibid.* p. 55.

"And endure what they say with patience,  
And depart from them with a decorous departure."

"And let me alone with the gainsayers, rich in the pleasure  
(of this life); and bear thou with them yet a little while." 6

Here are another two, delivered in Medina when the Prophet was in power:—

"Let there be no compulsion in religion,  
As truth has been made manifest from error." 7

"Obey God and obey the Apostle; but of ye turn away yet  
is our Apostle only charged with plain-spoken preaching." 8

Of the spirit in which the professors of these principles of enlightened tolerance applied themselves to the spreading of the faith anybody can see something if he examines some of the details of the history of the preaching of the faith. I am reminded in this connection of, the story of how Omar, perhaps the greatest of Muslim Khalifas, entered Jerusalem in the company of the Patriarch. Here are a few lines from the Charter which he issued to the people:—

"This is the security which Omar, the servant of God, the commander of the faithful, grants to the people of Aelia. He grants to all, whether sick or sound, security for their lives, their possessions, their churches, and their crosses, and for all that concerns their religion." 9

To bring home the missionary spirit of Islam, however, nothing could be more convincing than that great event in Muslim annals, namely, the conversion of the Mongols. The Mongols, under Chingez Khan, subdued China, and dividing into three huge armies swept over the whole of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. In about 1217, the entire world was thrown into panic. In 1253, Mangu Khan, a grandson of Chingez, sent Hulagu, another grandson, to complete the conquest of the Muslim West. Through Persia he reached Baghdad,

6. *The Holy Quran* (LXXIII:10-11).

7. *The Holy Quran* (II:257).

8. *The Holy Quran* (LXIV:12).

9. Arnold, p. 56.



the then capital of the Muslim world, on the 18th January 1258, and pitched his tent within the residence of the Khalifas. On February 10th the Khalifa, the last of a line of thirty-seven, who for 500 years had ruled over Baghdad, gave himself up to Hulagu. Less than 50 years after, a great-grandson of Hulagu himself embraced Islam, and the Mongols, turning away both from Christianity and Buddhism, became Muslims. The conversion of the Mongols is a triumph of the pacifist Islam. The men who had ravaged and sacked the beautiful cities of the Muslim Empire and massacred millions of Muslims now became the servants of Islam. It is a tribute to the Muslim missionary of those days and, more than the missionary, to the Quran which inculcates:—

“Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly warning; dispute with them but in the kindest manner.” 10

The converted prince, sorely regretting the excesses of his forefathers, wrote to the Muslim Sultan of Egypt:—

“So that these countries and cities may again be populated, these terrible calamities be put down, the sword be returned to the scabbard; that all peoples may dwell in peace and quietness and the necks of the Muslims be freed from the ills of humiliation and disgrace.” 11

For a long time now, Islam has been in adversity. Its spirit, however, has always been with it, and this same spirit will help it to rise again and reinstate its kingdom in the hearts of men.

## V.

A brief reference to the Muslim teaching. Perhaps the most important part of the Muslim teaching relevant to our subject matter is the manner in which Islam provides a synthesis of the various religions without losing its own distinctiveness. Most people believe that the systems to which they respectively adhere have the exclusive right to truth. This belief usually springs from another, according

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10. *The Holy Quran* (XVI:126).

11. Arnold, p. 232.

to which "revelation" the peculiar source of religion is confined to some systems and denied to others. There are many, of course, who are willing to credit the founders of systems other than their own with some kind of "revelation," but they do so more as a sort of personal homage to those teachers than as a result of a deliberate doctrine that all religions, wherever and at whatever time they have had their birth, have originated from a common divine source. This doctrine—which may well be worked out in details—is preached by Islam in its emphasis on the Universal Providence of God. God, the Lord of the whole Universe, could not limit His guidance to either one people or one period. Thus we read in the Quran:—

"There has not been a people but has had a warner." 12

A Muslim, therefore, testifies to the truth of all the great teachers known to history. To be a Muslim one has to acknowledge the truth of all those who came to guide mankind in the name of the Lord; the rejection of any one of them would amount to a denial of the Providence of God.

The distinctiveness of Islam, however, is preserved because Islam came at the end of a long process of evolution both in man and his environment. At different times, and to different peoples, the All-Wise Providence provided an appropriate kind of teaching until conditions were ripe for the advent of the Universal Law-Giving Prophet. That is why in earlier religious messages we do not find a definite claim either to universality or to finality such as we find in the Quran, nor a claim to security through the ravages of time, and against subsequent accretions and interpolations, such a claim having been made and evidently fulfilled in the case of the Quran. All the earlier scriptures, therefore, as also the earlier teachers, while acknowledged by the Quran and held in reverence by Muslims, are definitely regarded as superseded: the scriptures by the Quran and the teachers by the Prophet Muhammad. Subsequent Prophets, according to Islam, will follow the Law of the Quran, and the example of the Prophet.

The second part of the Muslim teaching likely to interest us is its uncompromising insistence on the Unity of God. In the Quran the polytheistic beliefs of the Christians are definitely denied. Thus:—

“And when Allah will say: O Jesus, Son of Mary! did you say to men, take me and my mother for two Gods, besides Allah, he will say: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had not right to; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind and I do not know what is in Thy mind; surely Thou art the Great Knower of the unseen things. ‘I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: That serve Allah my Lord and your Lord and I was a witness of them so long as I was amongst them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou were the watcher over them and Thou art witness of all things.’ ”

Of the belief regarding Jesus as the Son of God these verses are a significant denial:—

“They ascribe a son to the Beneficent God, and it is not worthy of the Beneficent God that He should take (to Himself) a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth but will come to the Beneficent God as a servant.” 13

The quality of Beneficence is stressed because it signifies the bounty of God who can forgive without being paid any compensation in the form of a son's sacrifice. Godhead is not shared by any other being. God is one. Of the Oneness of God comes the moral equality and the brotherhood of man, a brotherhood which is as perfect in practice as it is in theory. In the Quran there are numerous expressions which are very eloquent considering the present-day problems of race discrimination. God is described as the God of all the worlds, also as the God of the East as well as the West, of the Black, Red, and of the White. How far the brotherhood was realized in practice is brought out by the extreme reverence which to this day is paid to the name of an

Ethiopian slave called Bilal, who by reason of his loud voice became the first Muezzin to call to prayer in Islam. Bilal is extolled in prayer and in poetry, and no devout Muslim, black or white, would mention him without the reverential prayer, "God be pleased with him." The brotherhood of Islam is responsible for its persistence through centuries and its modern growth in Africa and other countries.

Mention may also be made here of the great difference between Muslim conquests and present-day colonization, incidentally perhaps touching the root of the race problem. When the Muslims established their rule in a territory, they settled on it, made it their home and cast their lot with the people. They did not try to segregate themselves from the natives, going near them and to their countries only for purposes of Government and for no other. Today the great error of the colonists, seems to be that the home of the empire—the mother country—is treated as a sort of Eugenia—the island of Wm. McDougall, where he proposes to concentrate all the selected ones of the race to protect them against deterioration! The home is the rallying point of the rulers. A great many able individuals, for instance, have had their life's experience in, and at the expense of, the colonies, but this experience did not stay in the colonies except for purposes of exploitation. The Muslim settlers allowed themselves to intermarry, regarding inter-marriage neither advisable nor inadvisable, but as something that may be allowed if parties desire it. Black priests sprang up who led the services of the white and other Muslims of lighter shades!

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The Holy Prophet Muhammad said, "The greatest crimes to associate another with God, to vex your father and mother, to murder your own species, to commit suicide, and to swear a lie."

\* \* \* \* \*

All actions are judged by the motives prompting them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The love of the world is the root of all evils.

# THE ORIGIN OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

Arabia, the birthplace of Islam was a land inhabited by warring tribes, who were exploited economically and subjugated politically by the Persians and the Romans. The practical teachings of the great Prophet of Islam brought about a complete transformation in their outlook on life and gave birth to one of the greatest revolutions in history.

According to Ameer Ali, "Afflicted humanity awoke into new life. Whilst the barbarians of Europe who had overturned an effete empire, were groping in the darkness of ignorance and brutality, the Muslims were building a great civilization. During centuries of moral and intellectual desolation in Europe, Islam led the vanguard of progress. The Prophet who always emphasised the need of learning is reported to have said that the ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr, and repeatedly impressed upon his disciples "the necessity for seeking knowledge even unto China". He said, "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks on the path of God." The injunctions of the great Prophet had a salutary effect on the hearts of his followers and created a love of knowledge which in a short time made them the pioneers in the world of sciences and arts. "Science and literature possess no votaries", says a celebrated historian, "but the words of the Prophet gave a new impetus to the awakened energies of the race. . . . Even within his life-time was formed the nucleus of an educational institution, which in after years grew into universities at Baghdad and Salerno, Cairo and Cordova".

The European hatred for learning during the period of the 7th to the 12th century A.D., served as a striking contrast to the great Islamic advancement in the field of sciences and arts. The lamp of learning was shedding profuse light in the Islamic domains at a time when European countries were steeped in the darkness of savagery. "From the fourth century of the Christian era to the 12th", says Ameer Ali, "the gloom that overshadowed Europe grew deeper and deeper.

During these ages of ferocious bigotry, ecclesiasticism barred every access through which the light of knowledge, humanity and civilization could enter. . . . . Under Constantine and his orthodox successors, the Aesclepius were closed for ever, the public libraries established by the liberality of the pagan emperors were dispersed or destroyed; learning was branded as magic and punished as Treason"—and philosophy and science were exterminated. The ecclesiastical hatred against human learning found expression in the patriotic maxim, 'Ignorance is the mother of devotion', and Pope Gregory the great, the founder of ecclesiastical supremacy, gave effect to this obscurantist dogma by expelling from Rome all scientific studies and burning the Palatine library founded by Augustus Caesar. He forbade the study of ancient writers of Greece and Rome. Even the Christian chroniclers bear testimony to the great apathy of the Christian west towards the advancement of knowledge and ascribe it to the non-cooperation of the church. Max Kaban in chapter II of the "*History of Medicine During the Middle Ages*", of the book entitled, "The Practice of Medicine," vol. I, says, "everything pagan was forgotten, the clergy discouraged the study or the possession of books written by the ancient Greeks and Romans. They held in abomination their sculptures and their works of art, their rhetorical lectures and philosophical speculations . . . . worldly joys, earthly beauty, sensuous pleasures, pagan learning, metaphysical discussions, were all abhorred as a temptation of the devil. It was dangerous to know too much".

The teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam had enshrined into the hearts of the Arabs veneration for the learned people and respect for the places of worship and learning. The conquering armies of the nomadic Arabs not only spared the libraries, churches and intellectuals of the alien faith, but extended patronage to them.

The Abbaside Caliphate provided the most congenial atmosphere for the growth of the sciences and arts. Al-Mansoor was the first Abbaside Caliph who ordered the translation of books from foreign languages into Arabic. He himself being a good literary scholar and mathematician patronised men of letters who flocked to his court to

continue their literary pursuits in an atmosphere free from all cares and anxieties. Mansoor had translated into Arabic Hitopadesa (Indian Fables) Siddhanta (Indian treatise on Astronomy), Almajest of Ptolemy, several works of Aristotle, books of Euclid and a large number of other Greek, Byzantine, Persian and Syrian works. Each nation of the world had its golden age. Athens had the Periclean era, Rome the Augustan age, while Islam had its period of intellectual glory extending from the accession of Mansoor to the death of Mutazid—a period comprising the reign of six Caliphs of which the reign of Al Mamun, constituted the most brilliant period during which the Muslims formed the vanguard of civilization. Caliph Mamun (813-833) established in Baghdad a school of translation known as "Darul Hukama" (School of Wisdom) in which Humayun Bin Ishaq was the dominant figure. The generous patronage of the enlightened Caliph drew to his court a galaxy of talented scholars from all corners of the known world. During his time and that of his illustrious father Haroon-ar-Rashid, every part of the globe was ransacked by the agents of the Caliphs for the hoarded wealth of antiquity. Mamun undoubtedly deserved the title of 'Augustus' of Arabs. He was followed by a brilliant succession of princes who continued his work. The main contribution of Mamun to the advancement of Arabian knowledge lies in the enormous translation work during his reign which paved the way for later outstanding achievements of Muslim scholars and scientists. Actually he provided the firm ground on which the majestic and imposing edifice of Islamic thought was built.

Of the dozens of translators serving during the reign of Mamun, Humayun bin Ishaq (809-873) occupies the most eminent place. He had ninety pupil translators under him and several well-known contemporary translators of various languages attached to him. Amongst these his nephew Hubaysh, his son Ishaq (d/910 A.D.), the great mathematician Tabit bin Qurra (825-901) and Qusta bin Luqa, acquired great fame. Humayun is the author of the famous "Missive" which contains the translations of the immense corpus of Galenic writings—amounting to 100 Syriac and 39 Arabic versions of Galens' Medical and Philosophical works. The work of translation was

pursued with the utmost vigour and Humayun and his family played an important part in translating categories, physics and Magna Moralia of Aristotle; the Republica, Law and Timacus of Plato. The house of wisdom mainly concerned with the work of the translations ceased to exist after the death of its great patron, Mamun. Round about 856 A.D. Mutawakkil refounded in Baghdad the library and translation school of which Humayun was made the director.

Muslim rulers and their Amirs patronized learning and had the greatest respect for learned men who were always welcomed in their societies. Some of the more enthusiastic monarchs competed with each other in drawing to his court the largest number of intellectuals of their age. Even the notorious tyrant Hajjaj bin Yousuf was a good mathematician and a well-known patron of men of letters. Of all the dignitaries of Islam the first six Caliphs of the Abbaside Caliphates stand as the greatest patrons of learning who were instrumental in raising Islamic knowledge to the summit of its glory.

The rise of Cairo under Al Muizli-Dinullah produced a spirit of rivalry with the Caliphs of the Houses of Abbas and Fatima regarding the patronage of learning. Al Muiz is known as the Mamun of the East.

Mahmood Ghaznavi and his son Masood were great patrons of learning whose generosity drew to their court such intellectual giants as Al-Biruni the versatile genius, Firdausi, the immortal poet, Dakiki and Unsari. Mahmood is said to have offered sixty thousand gold pieces to Firdausi for his world famous "Shahnama" and Masood had bestowed an elephant load of silver on Al Biruni for his celebrated astronomical work "Qanun-al-Masudi".

The rise of the Suljukides and their munificence for the scholars who flocked to their court rivalled that of the golden days of the Abbaside rule. Tughril, Alp Arsalan, Sanjar and above all Malik Shah were great patrons of learning. Khwaja Hasan Nizamul-Mulk Toosi, the illustrious Vazier of Malik Shah drew around him the intellectual gems of the Islamic world, comprising astronomers, poets, theologians, mathematicians, scientists and historians.



Even the so-called savage Timur (Tamerlane) accumulated the cultural heritage of Islamic Dominions in his capital Samarkand—and his vast system of colonisation filled the big cities of central Asia, especially Samarkand with intellectuals. Such talented scholars like Jami, the master of sciences, Suhaili the translator of Pilpay, and Ali Sher Anwar, adorned the literary societies of Tamerlane. Ulugh Khan, a grandson of Timur, himself being a noted astronomer, enhanced the intellectual glory of Samarkand.

The Moorish kings of Spain and the Mughal emperors of India did not lag behind others in encouraging the pursuit of sciences and arts in their dominions, and such intellectual giants as Averros, Ibne Khaldoon, Faizi and Abul Fazal found a congenial atmosphere in their scientific and literary researches.

Thus the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam bore fruit and the savage Arabs distinguished themselves as the torch-bearers of civilization, knowledge and culture in the world, ultimately dispelling the gloom which had enveloped Mediaeval Europe.

*Condensed from an article by Khwaja Jamil Ahmed in Pakistan Review, January 1953.*

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## CURRENT TOPICS

### Islam's Influence upon Western Thought

In the field of law, Islamic scholars were limited by authoritarian principles of their religious heritage, but despite this limitation they were able to make some contributions. Santillana credits to them certain legal institutions such as limited partnership and certain technicalities of commercial law, but in general, there is no doubt that the high ethical standards of certain parts of Arab law have had a positive influence upon the development of our modern concepts. (Dide Santillana in *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 310.) In commerce, Islam pioneered in the establishment of trade associations and joint stock companies and in the use of checks, letters of credit, receipts, and bills of lading.

One of the greatest contributions of Muslim culture to European thought was the work of its philosophers. The Arabic philosophers rediscovered Greek philosophy, and, above all the works of Aristotle. Through their translations and studies they introduced Aristotle and Neo-platonism to the West centuries before the revival of Greek scholarship in the Renaissance. As late as the beginning of the fourteenth century, the University of Paris admitted Aristotle only as explained by Ibn Rushd's (Averroes) commentary.

Al-Kindi, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd all acted not only as preservers and transmitters of classical philosophy, but also as commentators and contributors to it. The works of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd were particularly influential for Christian philosopher-theologians.

Foremost among Christian thinkers touched by the influence of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd was Thomas Aquinas. Al-Ghazali's works reached Thomas through the *pugio Fidei* of Raymund Martin of the Toledo School, who incorporated much of al-Ghazali's works into his writing. Some of the more important questions on which St. Thomas and al-Ghazali agree are "The value of human reason in explaining or demonstrating the truth about divine things; the ideas of contingency and necessity as demonstrating the existence of God; the unity of God implied in His perfection; the possibility of the beatific vision: the divine knowledge and the divine simplicity; God's speech *averbum mentis*; the names of God; miracles a testimony to the truth of the prophets' utterances; the dogma of the resurrection from the dead." (A. Guillaume in *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 274.) These conclusions reveal the creative thinking of both of these philosopher-theologians, and suggest an influence of the former on the latter.

St. Thomas was also stimulated by the works of Ibn Rushd and of his followers, who taught that faith and reason are mutually contradictory, and that matter from revelation must be rejected in the face of opposing reason. St. Thomas set out to prove that faith and reason are not incompatible; that they work together; but that in

some instances faith goes beyond the limits of mere reason in revealed matters. He established reason as a handmaiden of faith, and kept theology and philosophy as important conjunctive disciplines.

Guillaume shows that Ibn Rushd actually taught the harmony of faith and reason just as Thomas did. Both gave reason its proper place, made use of the ancients and at the same time submitted their conclusions to the criticism which the reflection of subsequent centuries demands. Both held the reasonableness of a middle course between a skeptical mysticism and a rationalism which is divorced altogether from belief in the possibility of a revealed religion.

. . . . . But all relations between Christians and Muslims were not as productive as the philosophical exchange. For every Thomas who studied Islamic writers and met their claims with reasoned replies there were hundreds of churchmen who saw the Muslims only as menacing infidels and reacted with uninstructed and impassioned hatred. And before Thomas could garner the fruits of Islamic scholarship without fear of compromising his own faith, centuries of tactical encounter between Christians and Muslims had taken place.

*The Impact of Islam on Christianity*, by Kenneth H. Crandall, American Friends of The Middle East, New York.

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## Marriage, Divorce and the Church of England

Polygamy had been practised in Israel from the time of the patriarchs certainly till the day of Solomon, but long before our Lord's time monogamy had been the rule among the Jews. Divorce at the will of the husband and by mutual consent was current practice in our Lord's day (though we are not entitled to assume that it was widespread). It is in reply to questions about divorce that our Christ's teaching is given and he certainly is not claiming to deliver some new doctrine on this subject but to give the true interpretation of the Old Testament scriptures. He recalls the creation by God of man and woman and His will for their cohabitation. The Mosaic ordinance of divorce he states was given "for the hardness of men's hearts" and he recalls them to the true way of marriage. The one flesh designed

by the ordinance of God is violated by divorce.

. . . . . The Church opposes legislation which loosens the marriage bond for the nation as a whole, not to be merely obstructive but because it firmly holds that our Lord's teaching sets the plan for the right relationship between men and women. There is often a tendency to regard these particular relationships as private matters, but of course nothing more deeply affects the life of society and the nation. The Christian Church, therefore, stands firmly for the general observance of the Christian marriage standard as a matter of public morality and national wellbeing, just the same as it would stand for particular standards of honesty, of freedom and of social justice. In all these cases the immediate interests of certain sections of the population will be at variance with the teaching of the Church, but the good of the people as a whole depends upon such standards, whether they happen to be welcome or not.

The foregoing perhaps serves to explain why the Church of England refuses to remarry in church those whose marriages have been dissolved in the Civil Court. In the light of our Lord's teaching no human agency can be regarded as competent to void a validly contracted and consummated marriage. Also (and this is important) the marriage vow is so explicit in character, "for better for worse, till death do us part", that it would be hypocrisy amounting to blasphemy to allow a person to vow before God fidelity till death while the object of a similar avowal was still living. The sacredness of solemn promises is not the least important aspect of human life which the Church's marriage regulations help to safeguard.

The Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Kensington in *Religions*, London, England, January-April 1953.

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## American Stake in the Middle East

The term (American Stake in the Middle East, ed.) is one which is familiar to most Americans and it frequently refers to the amount of money which has actually been invested in a given activity. This is one possible interpretation of the meaning of America's stake in the Middle East, the funds which have been invested by private concerns, missionary activities, educational institutions, and governmental agen-

cies. A more important interpretation of the term is, "What America could lose if she were to be shut out of the Middle East through the development of enmity on the part of the people living in that part of the world." These two interpretations are not in the least degree the same, for friendly Middle East is far more valuable to the United States of America than are our investments there.

. . . . . It is impossible even to attempt a calculation of the money value of such loss. It would be an interesting experiment in mathematics to attempt such a calculation but one need only consider our hopes for the future of the entire world to realize how important this stake is to us.

The closure of the Middle East to friendly relations with the United States would inevitably mean the complete loss or at least the strict curtailment of freedom throughout the world. So far as Europe is concerned it would inevitably mean a destruction of the principles of national freedom and of self-government. This destruction would come about either through a domination of the totalitarian ideal in Europe due to the disruption of European economy or else to the establishment of an almost complete dependence upon American economy. The latter cannot possibly support the burden unless it assumes general political and economic control in the European area.

If this second alternative of dependence upon American economy were to come to pass it would inevitably mean a loss of free enterprise in the United States. The effort of supporting both our own and the European economy would necessitate rigid governmental control of the means of production and of our economic resources and this in turn would bring about a strict governmental control of economic, social, and even personal life. The establishing of a government which occupied such central importance in the life of the United States would itself mean a victory of the totalitarian system, thus in the case of either alternative the principles of government of which we are devoted would inevitably undergo destruction and disillusionment.

Dr. Stephen B. L. Penrose, President, American University of Beirut, in an address delivered in a meeting of the American Friends of the Middle East, as quoted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, February 18, 1953.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali.* W. Montgomery Watt. London. George Allen and Unwin Co. Distributed by Macmillan Company, New York. 1953. 155 pages. Price \$2.25.

Imam Al-Ghazali is one of the most eminent theologians of Islam. His books on *Tasawwuf* (mysticism) have perhaps been given more study by the West than the works of any other Muslim Sufi. Here in this volume, Professor W. Montgomery Watt of University of Edinburgh, presents a translation of, *Deliverance from Error (Al-munqidh min ad-Dalal)*, and a part of *The Revival of Religious Sciences (Ihya 'Ulum ad Din)*. The volume is in the Series of "Ethical and Religious Classics of East and West", meant "to place the chief ethical and religious masterpieces of the world, both Christian and non-Christian, within the easy reach of the intelligent reader who is not necessarily an expert".

The first of these books translated in this volume, *Deliverance From Error*, is an autobiographical book in which Imam Ghazali has presented the "difficulties he encountered in his attempt to extricate the truth from the confusion and the venture of climbing from the plain of second-hand belief to direct vision. The Imam classifies the various seekers after truth in four main groups and then goes on to show what these groups have achieved. After analysing the methods of the Theologians, the Batiniyah and the philosophers and accepting that all of them have achieved something, the eminent Imam explains that it is the way of *Tariqat* which leads the man toward the road to God. "Their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character", says Imam Ghazali, describing the way of those who follow *Tariqat* and purify their hearts completely from what is other than God and sink completely in His recollection.

The Muslim Sufis have been often considered similar to the hermits or monks in other religions, the people who consider that one should divorce the worldly life completely in order to recognize his Creator. Imam Ghazali clearly explains that this is not the case. He weighs the life of retirement with that of serving mankind and definitely decides in favor of the latter. He tells us very forcefully that one who wants to follow this way should reflect on the Quran and read the Traditions for it was the Holy Prophet who showed the greatest concern for showing to people the true way.

In the second book translated in this volume, the Imam presents a discussion of the religious practices and the conduct in social relationships which he set up as an ideal for him.

Professor Watt has done an outstanding job in rendering these works of al-Ghazali into English. We hope that this volume will enable the world to understand that one of the greatest Sufis of Islam did not advocate the philosophy of retirement as a solution to tackle with the problems of the day.

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*The Formation of the New Testament.* H. F. D. Sparks. New York. Philosophical Library. 1953. 172 pages. Price \$3.00.

In the history of Christianity in the past there has been too much emphasis on the contention that the New Testament is something given direct to man by God and hence, existing by its own right. Modern scholarship has steadily drifted away from this position. The New Testament is now being presented as the "Church's Book." The writer of this volume elaborates this thesis quite successfully. He aims to show that it is Book of the Church in the sense that Church produced it in a long period of time and it was developed according to the needs of the Church. All the New Testament writers, and there is great deal of difference about the authorship of various books as Mr. Sparks points out, "were writing from within the Church for the Church's immediate edification and benefit."

The story of the compilation of the Bible should also enable a student of the Bible to decide whether it was meant to be something to have supreme control over the Church. It is quite interesting to learn that earliest collection of a considerable part of what today is known as the New Testament was made by one Marcion in the middle of the second century. This Marcion was later condemned by the Church and he and his followers excommunicated. Mr. Sparks considers it quite probable that this first edition of the New Testament was supplied by prefaces by Marcion describing the circumstances in which each book was written. Thus the first Canon was drawn by this "heretic", who forced the Church to do the same. But even in the early fourth century there was no agreement as to which books should be included in the New Testament. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, dividing the books of the New Testament into three classes clearly puts some in the classes of Spurious and Disputed books. It is on the authority of St. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in 367, says Mr. Sparks, that the present collection of the New Testament was canonized.

Accepting this convincing thesis that the New Testament owes both form and content to situations and issues in the developing life of the early Church the question is immediately posed as to how far one can and should rely on a gospel which was definitely written to fulfil the needs of a temporary period. This may also explain why the New Testament has undergone so many changes



through its history and why its present day translators take such liberties in substituting new words to its text.

Mr. Spark's dissertation can be of great value in an understanding of the growth of the New Testament in its proper historical perspective.

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*Muhammad at Mecca.* W. Montgomery Watt. New York. Oxford University Press. 1953. 192 pages. Price \$3.50.

Professor W. Montgomery Watt presents a life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as a "historian of the mid-twentieth century". He makes it clear in the introduction that his studies will not satisfy a Christian who may look into it with a view to find a certain attitude toward the Prophet. On the other hand to a Muslim reader he also tells that although he has endeavoured to remain faithful to the standards of Western scholarship yet there may be some conclusions unacceptable to Islam. The aim of the author in writing this biography is to pay more detailed attention to the material factors, such as social, economic and political background of Islam.

Professor Watt has attempted to draw his material from the sources of the Holy Quran, the *Sirah* by Ibn-Hisham, the *Annals* of at-Tabari, the *Maghazi* of al-Waqidi and the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd. In general the author has tried to keep up to the standards of a history scholar although there are several places where his conclusions can be questioned even strictly from the point of view of a scholar and not a faithful believer. He admits that "many of the questions in which the historian of the mid-twentieth century is interested are not affected by the process of shaping" of the traditions. This attitude may seriously be questioned in such cases where one distorted tradition may be the only source to draw upon in regards to some event.

Let us, for example, take the story of "satanic verses". At-Tabari writes that some people of Quraish said to the Holy Prophet that if he would compromise with them to the extent that he would make some mention of their goddesses they would be inclined to have more liking for him. At-Tabari says that the satan then threw into his formulation and when these verses of the *Sura Al-Najm* were revealed, "Have you then considered the Lat and the 'Uzza, and Manat, the third, the last?", the satan caused to come upon his tongue, "These are the swans exalted, whose intercession is to be hoped for".

After relating two versions of this tale from at-Tabari the author concludes that Muhammad must have publicly recited the satanic verses as part of the Quran because "it is unthinkable that the story could be invented later by Muslims or foisted upon them by non-Muslims". He also deduces that the Prophet at some later time announced that these verses were not really part of the Quran.

Now both of these conclusions are strictly in the field of speculation and it is not very infrequent that even fair-minded scholars like Professor Watt fall in the trap of just mere guessing; and many times this guess lies in the realm of remote probability. This need not be emphasized that one of the two narrators of this tale, al-Waqidi, has been considered as unreliable by most orientalists. As regards Tabari, even such a prejudiced writer as Sir William Muir considers him as guilty of "indiscriminate reception". As against those two unreliable authorities, we are told by Ruh-ul Ma'ani, that those who reject this story are highly learned men. But even if their opinion be discarded, it is incumbent upon a scholar to find out why there is absolutely no mention of this very important event in any one of the *Siba Sitta*, the authentic six collections of the Traditions. The compiler of the most authentic of these collections, Imam Bukhari, who was Waqidi's contemporary has nothing to say in support of this story. Even Ibn Ishaque, who was at least half a century earlier than Waqidi, and whose contribution to the biography of the Holy Prophet has been described by Professor Watt as "the most considerable" and "most influential" does not have a single word about this incident. In the absence of any other support to Tabari's version, it will be stretching the imagination too far and in a very un-scholarly fashion to say that, "it is unthinkable that the story could have been invented". One should only turn to the very text of the Holy Quran to check its authenticity. It is entirely illogical that in a sura where the whole context is against idolatry, such out of place verses could have been inserted. Moreover, if the Prophet had made any such compromise it could not have been a sudden event, and traces of it should have been in other chapters revealed about the same time.

Excepting such instances professor Watt has certainly presented a valuable study and made an important contribution to the books written by the Western writers on the life of the Holy Prophet.

### A Saying From the Holy Prophet:

*(Continued from page 2)*

To tell the Muslims on one hand not to open warfare and on the other to stand against the enemy bravely and steadfastly should such situation be created for them shows that although Islam wants a Muslim never to be an aggressor yet it also aims to eliminate all fear of death from his heart. This is the medium path which can pave the way toward the real progress of a people. They should discipline themselves so as never to be oppressors and they should also be so fearless and brave in the face of death as to view paradise under the swords.

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